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## GLOSSARY OF KIN, NATIVE, AND TECHNICAL TERMS

### Kin Terms

601 arndi—mother.
bapa—father.
dué—father's sister's son (husband); father's sister's daughter.
dumungur—father's sister's daughter's daughter's son; father's sister's daughter's daughter's daughter.
gallę—mother's brother's son; mother's brother's daughter (wife).
gatu—son; daughter.
gawel—mother's brother.
gurrong—father's sister's daughter's son; father's sister's daughter's daughter.
kanmyer—daughter's son; daughter's daughter.
kutata—sister's daughter's son; sister's daughter's daughter.
maraitcha—son's son; son's daughter.
marelker—mother's mother's brother's son.
mari—mother's mother's brother; mother's mother.
marikmo—father's father; father's father's sister.
mokul bapa—father's sister.
mokul rumeru—mother's mother's brother's daughter (mother-in-law).
momelker—mother's mother's mother's brother's daughter.
momo—father's mother.
nati—mother's father.
natjiwalker—mother's mother's mother's brother's son.
waku—sister's son; sister's daughter; father's father's sister's son; father's father's sister's daughter.
wawa—older brother.
yeppa—sister.
yukiyuko—younger brother.

### Native Terms

104 Bamun—the mythological period when "things were different" and the totemic spirits and the ancestors of man inhabited the land.
Bapa Indi—*see* Muit.
baperu—native name for moiety, meaning four subsections that belong to each moiety.
billibong—a general term used by the Australian whites for a small lake or pool.
bilmel, bilmal—singing sticks.
birimbir—the totemic soul of man (*see* mokoi).
corroboree—a general term used by the Australian whites for native ceremonies.

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dal—ritually powerful, a quality possessed by things that are *maraiin*. Literally, "hardy," "strong."

diramo—man, male.

Djungguan—an elaborate totemic ceremony associated with the rock python cult. The myth of the two Wawilak sisters is connected with this ritual. There are three other major ceremonies also related to the myth of the Wawilak sisters: the Gunabibi, Marndiella, and Ulmark. The Djungguan is "owned" by the Dua moiety.

Djunkgao—the two creator sisters of the East (*see* Narra).

Dua—one of the two moieties in the dual organization.

garma—the Murngin totems are classed chiefly into higher and lower orders, the higher being more sacred, the lower more profane and used in the general camp. The higher totems are called ranga, and the lower totems garma. Emblems, myths, rituals, songs, and dances belong to this lower totemic configuration and are so graded. Garma usually refers to the emblem or to the ceremony. Garma totems may be seen by women, whereas ranga may not.

Gunabibi—*see* Djungguan.

gungmun—a woman who has had a child, literally "the giver."

Makarata—ceremonial peace-making duel.

mangel—spear-thrower.

maraiin—sacred, spiritual, powerful, taboo, connected with the totem. It sometimes is used as a synonym for totem.

Marndiella—*see* Djungguan.

mielk—woman, female.

mokoi—all men have two souls, according to the Murngin: the totemic (birimbir or warro) and the trickster or mokoi one. The former goes to the totemic well at death, and the mokoi to the jungle.

Muit—the python totem. *Also called* Yurlunggur, Bapa Indi, and Great Father.

Narra—this term refers to the totemic well or hole, or a variety of totemic ceremonies associated with the totemic emblem. A Narra totem belongs to the higher order and is connected with the myth of the Djunkgao sisters.

ranga—a totem of a higher order. The word usually refers to the emblem. *See* garma.

Ulmark—*see* Djungguan.

warntdjer (leaf)—a garma type of ceremony for the removal of the spirits of the dead.

warro—same as birimbir, the true soul, "the soul from the heart."

Wawilak—the two creator sisters of the West. The term Wawilak refers to a clan of the interior as well as to the two mythological sisters whose careers are traced in the Wawilak creation myth. The term as an adjective is used to refer to the myth, several rituals (*see* Djungguan), and so on.

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104 wirkul—a young woman who has not had a child.
wirtit—native term for the rock python. *See* Muit.
womera—spear-thrower.
Wongar—a general name applied to the totemic spirits. "In the time of Wongar" refers to the mythological period (Bamun) when the totems inhabited the earth and were frequently like man. Wongar men or Wongar animals are, respectively, totemic ancestors and totemic animals.
Yermerlindi—a totemic python emblem used in the Gunabibi ceremony.
Yiritja—one of the two moieties in the dual organization.
Yurlunggur—*see* Muit.

### Technical Terms

age grade—a social division based primarily on sex and the position of the male in the family and ritual structures.
All Father—a vague, otiose, spiritual being who is of little importance in Murngin thought.
black magic—the magic which is harmful to man.
clan—the Murngin clan is a unilateral kinship group which traces the descent of its members through the father. Marriage must take place outside the group. It is totemic and owns a more or less definite territory.
classificatory kinship—in the anthropological literature this term usually refers to the system of classifying certain collateral relatives with the lineal kin and of placing people who are of no blood relationship in the categories of other kin who are. For example, a man's or woman's father's brothers are classed as fathers, and the father's father's brothers are classed as paternal grandfathers (marikmo). The mother's sisters are called mother, and their mother and her sisters are all called maternal grandmother (mari). This particular form of the classificatory system, by which the father's kin and the mother's kin are separated, has been called the Dakota System (*see* Robert H. Lowie, *Primitive Society*).
cross-cousin marriage—marriage of the children of unlike siblings; i.e., marriage of ego to mother's brother's daughter or to father's sister's daughter.
symmetrical cross-cousin marriage—system whereby ego may marry *either* mother's brother's daughter *or* father's sister's daughter.
asymmetrical cross-cousin marriage—system whereby ego may marry *only* mother's brother's daughter or *only* father's sister's daughter.
equivalence of brothers—the social rule by which brothers are seen as occupying the same sociological position and are treated as such by the society; as, for example, in the Murngin kinship system.
exogamic—marriage outside the group.
family, limited—father, mother, and their children.
family of orientation—immediate family into which ego (male or female)

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is born, including upper generation: mother and father; lower generation: sisters and brothers.

family of procreation—family created by ego by marriage, including upper generation: father (ego) and mother (also ego); lower: their sons and daughters.

function—what a technical object, social unit, or social element does in the group economy.

Great Father—*see* Muit in glossary of native terms.

horde—the Murngin horde is an economic group of people temporarily occupying a certain area of land. The membership of this social unit consists of from a small number of individuals to possible hundreds. It includes the members of several clans and the two moieties.

"inside"—a word used to describe the sacred part of the dichotomy made by the Murngin between the ceremonial world of the totem and the profane world of the general camp. "Inside" also means deeper and more profound, since it refers to the totem.

killing stick—a sharp, hard, short stick supposedly used by the black magician in his killings.

levirate—the inheritance of a dead man's wives by his brothers; in the junior levirate, by his younger brothers.

mana—the impersonal spiritual power or essence found everywhere according to Murngin thought and which can take tangible form in a man, totem, animal, totemic object, and so on.

moiety—a moiety among the Murngin is a unilateral kinship group which traces descent of its members through the father. Marriage must be with a member of the opposite moiety. The several clans are divided between the two moieties. These two divisions of the tribe are sometimes referred to as a dual organization.

"outside"—this term applies to the profane and ordinary meaning of a word, and when used as a geographical expression it means the camp inhabited by all the people, including women and children. (*See* "inside.")

patrilineal line—a lineage of fathers, sons, brothers, fathers' fathers, sons' sons, and the sisters of these men.

phratry—a phratry in Murngin society is a loose grouping of several clans within a moiety, usually on the mythological or ritual basis. It is not exogamic.

power—*see* mana.

reciprocal (in kinship)—summation of all the relations between two people who constitute a kinship bond, as mother's brother (gawel) and sister's son (waku).

*rite de passage*—a formal ceremony by which the status of an individual changes from that of one age group to another.

sororate—the right of a husband of a woman to the remainder of her sisters after he has acquired the first of these female siblings.

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104 subincision—incision of the urethra. In the southern part of the Murngin area, as in Central Australia, it is part of one of the important ceremonies.

subsection system—a reclassification into eight groups or subsections.

totemism—a form of religion found in primitive society by which a group establishes ritual relations with spiritual beings who are generally species of plants or animals. The totems of the Murngin include not only the plants and animals but certain physical and social items taken from the world of man. In the Murngin totemic complex are included the totems (spiritual beings), totemic ancestors (the mythological ancestors of modern man who consorted with the totems in the creation period [Baumun]), and religious totemic emblems (objects made by the Murngin which symbolize the spiritual reality of the totemic spirits). Other elements in the complex are totemic myths, totemic rituals, dances, songs, etc. (*see* garma and ranga).

tribe—the Murngin tribe is a loose grouping of clans based largely upon a general linguistic unity. It has no chiefs, head men, or formal political structure.

white magic—the magic which is helpful to man.

6: Berndt E-5 (1946-1947) 1951
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the guise of an Ancestral Being) is the proselytizer, the carrier of the germ of a religious idea, which is adopted by, and modified to suit, the social group in which he finds himself. Whether he brought with him the ingredients of that religion from his own "home", or whether it took shape in consequence of his contact with the alien people, is a matter for conjecture.

The diffusion of Aboriginal religious cults, such as the Kunapipi, also presents some interesting features. A certain amount of more or less "pure" evangelization has occurred in this respect; individual cult leaders, of both historic and contemporary society, have been interested in furthering the activities of the cult. But in their successful and unsuccessful attempts to introduce their particular beliefs into other groups, they take only the basis of their cult life, and do not as a rule attempt to superimpose their own cultural ideas and organization. In north-eastern Arnhem Land, for example, the Kunapipi, recognized by natives themselves as an introduced theme, has been fairly well integrated with existing social organization, religious life, and secular beliefs; even its mythology has been altered to meet the demands of local ethics, while the alien songs are interpreted in the light of indigenous criteria. Nevertheless, the basic ideology and construction of the Kunapipi cult remain: and it is this aspect which really concerns the proselytizer. The same process may be observed in other regions, such as western Arnhem Land, the Daly River-Port Keats area, and west-central Northern Territory.

* * * *

A word should be said concerning the presentation of Kunapipi Song Cycles (that is, in Chapters VII, VIII, X, and XI). Their value lies in their substantiation of the cult's doctrine, explaining its outward expression in ritual and in the use of ceremonial emblems and objects. Such traditional songs ensure that the original intent of the cult is not lost or radically misinterpreted. To-day, however, misinterpretation is possible as a result of conflicting loyalties arising from the contact of Aboriginal with European culture. In order to restrict ourselves to the literal interpretation of these songs, it has been found necessary to present them with an interlinear translation, a general rendering, and a brief commentary based on native interpretation: this method makes available the maximum amount of data. The phonetic script used conforms to that of the International Phonetic Association,[2] amended for use in Australia by Dr. A. Capell.[3]

2. G. Noel-Armfield, *General Phonetics*, 1931, pp. 21-23. *Vide* R. and C. Berndt, "A Preliminary Report of Field-Work in the Ooldea Region, Western South Australia", *Oceania Bound Reprint*, Sydney, 1945, pp. 262-264, or *Oceania*, Vol. XV, No. 1, pp. 50-52.
3. A. Capell, *Methods and Materials for Recording Australian Languages*, Sydney, 1945 (reprinted from *Oceania*, Vol. XVI, No. 2, pp. 144-176). Since the complete phonetic script was not available for rendering native words in this volume, some equivalents in ordinary English lettering have been used.

7: Berndt E-5 (1946-1950) 1952
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## *Foreword*

and Sir James Frazer, and their individual importance may not be underestimated.

It is our plan to present in one volume the substance of the Djanggawul cult; this includes the significance of the myth and ritual, the myth itself, the song cycle, and a partial analysis. A great deal rests on the cycle itself, which is essentially the core of the work; so we have deliberately chosen to give poetic renderings of the songs in English. The second volume is devoted entirely to the interlinear phonetic renderings,[1] with detailed notes attached; the reader is advised to read the English translations in conjunction with these, which of necessity include many additional references. This arrangement still leaves untreated a great deal of material relating to the Djanggawul. It is planned, therefore, to present at an early date the complete Milingimbi version of the song cycle, with analysis, for this differs in several major points from the Yirrkalla version presented here. The Yirrkalla song cycle as set out here contains 188 separate songs, and the Milingimbi cycle 264 songs.[2] There is also a mass of material relating to the rituals themselves, and to dreams. Here we are able to give only a brief sketch of the sequence of *dua nara* ritual, without treating it in detail. The dreams of various informants at Yirrkalla about

[1] In this volume native words are recorded (for publication purposes) in an anglicized version of our usual phonetic rendering, without using special symbols—whereas usually we follow the system recommended by the International Phonetic Association, with modifications and additions by Dr. A. Capell (*vide* 'Methods and Materials for Recording Australian Languages', *Oceania*, 1945, Vol. XVI, pp. 144-76).

There is a very real need for conformity of orthography in regard to Australian Aboriginal languages, and this can be achieved only by the use of standardized symbols. Thus *j* is generally used with its Continental value of *y*. The use of the *y* initially or within a word is too loose even in anglicized spelling, while *j* is a much more accurate rendering of the native sound.

It is hoped that future workers in Arnhem Land, or for that matter in other parts of Aboriginal Australia, will build on the orthographic foundations being laid to-day by anthropologists and linguists in Australia. It is partly on this account, the unwillingness of some field workers to conform, that Aboriginal terms and concepts are often hard to identify as between different authors. When reference is made to the work of Professor Lloyd Warner, *A Black Civilization*, and native words are quoted, his rendering is given alongside of ours. Recent anthropologists like T. G. H. Strehlow, *Aranda Traditions*, have also adhered to the use of the *j*.

[2] The Yirrkalla songs are on the whole longer than those from Milingimbi. The latter cycle continues the travels of the Djanggawul to Balbanara; this place is between the Blyth and Kupangu Creeks and the Liverpool River, inland from about the centre of Boucaut Bay, west of Milingimbi. A volume (entitled *Daughters of the Sun*) containing and discussing the Milingimbi version of the Djanggawul has now been prepared for publication.

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# GLOSSARY

Ancestral Times, see *wongar*.

*baba*, father.

*babaru*, father's clan; a concept of moiety unity with descent through the father.

Baijini, pre-Macassan visitors to the north-eastern Arnhem Land coast: now considered to be virtually contemporaneous with the Djanggawul.

*baima*, 'let (them) stay there'; 'always there'; or 'stay(ing) behind'.

Banaitja, son of Laintjung, an Ancestral Being, of the *jiritja* moiety: represented totemically as a barramundi fish.

Bildjiwuraroiju, the elder Djanggawul Sister: see *gungwan*.

billabong, usually a lake fed by a main stream, or a branch of a river that, instead of returning to the main stream, comes to a dead end. Billabongs are formed, too, during the monsoonal season in low-lying parts of the country, and may remain for the greater part of the year.

*bilma*, see clapping sticks.

Bralbral, the companion of the two Djanggawul Sisters and their Brother. He also came from Bralgu, and journeyed with them for some little time.

Bralgu, the mythical island(s) of the dead for members of the *duu* moiety, from which the Djanggawul set out on the last stage of their journey to the Australian mainland.

Brother, the Djanggawul Brother, who came with the Two Sisters.

*budjei*, smell; salty 'sea' smell; smell of vagina.

*bugali*, invocation; invoking the presence of (in this case) the Djanggawul.

'bush' foods, those of indigenous growth (uncultivated).

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# *Glossary*

clan, see *mala*.

clapping sticks, sometimes called *bilma*: two sticks of resonant wood clapped together by a singing man, while another man blows on the drone pipe.

conical mat, see *ngainmara*.

Creative Beings, that is, the Djanggawul Sisters and Brother. (Also certain other Ancestral Beings connected only indirectly with the theme considered here.)

cycad palm nut, 'bread': cycad nuts are specially prepared and made into 'dampers' like bread, wrapped in fine paperbark, and stored for ceremonial times. In this context it is usually employed sacramentally.

*dabi*, foreskin, umbilical cord, clitoris, sun's rays (as well as other symbolic references).

*dagu*, vagina, vulva, sun's disc (and other symbolic references).

*dal*, see 'power'.

*dalwuldalwul*, mouth of the *ngainmara* conical mat; symbolic of vulva, etc.

*daimiri*, species of sawfish.

dilly-bag, general term for certain indigenous twined baskets used by both men and women. There are many shapes and sizes, some painted with coloured ochres, others hung with feathered pendants: in the context of this study, usually the latter. (In all cases, symbolic of the uterus.)

*djalga*, water goanna; also sacred emblem.

*djanda*, sacred emblem; goanna; goanna tail; phallic symbol; same function as the *manwulan rangga*.

*djawuldjawul*, a mangrove bird.

*djuda*, tree *rangga* emblem, from which trees sprang up when plunged into the ground by the Djanggawul.

*djunggawon*, age-grading circumcisional ceremonies associated with the Wauwalak Cycle, which is connected only incidentally with the Djanggawul.

*djunmal*, a mangrove bird (unidentified); also called a 'message' bird.

Dreaming, see *wongar*.

drone pipe, didgeridoo; hollow wooden musical instrument into which a man blows to provide an accompaniment to singing and dancing.

*dua*, one of the two moieties in the dual organization: the moiety to which belong the Djanggawul and the totems associated with them.

*dua nara*, the ceremonies instituted by the Djanggawul; the ritual expressions of the songs and mythology of these Beings, controlled by members of the *dua* moiety.

*dugarri*, a periwinkle or black shell, collected by the Djanggawul Sisters while their sacred bags and *rangga* emblems were being stolen by the men.

*duldjiduldji*, point of the sacred *manwulan rangga* emblem.

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# *Glossary*

'Eternal stream', see *wongar*.

'feathered ball', disc of the Morning Star. These 'balls' are made by the Spirits of Bralgu, attached to long strings and poles and sent into the sky as they dance. 104

*gadin*, clitoris (referring to those of the two Djanggawul Sisters).

*gadu*, daughter or son (man speaking); brother's children (woman speaking).

*galibingu*, a circumcision novice.

*ganinjari*, sacred 'yam' stick or 'walking stick' emblem possessed of life-giving properties (used by the Djanggawul to obtain water).

Goanna Tail *rangga*, see *djanda*.

ground, sacred, used for sacred dancing, for example, of the *nara*; in this context it is symbolic of the uterus of either Djanggawul Sister.

*gudara*, sister's daughter's son or daughter, son's son or daughter (man speaking). See *mari* (*gudara* is the reciprocal of *mari*).

*gumur*, chest, front, barrier, etc.

*gungman*, referring to the elder Djanggawul Sister; a general word meaning a mature woman of child-bearing age, with children.

*gurlga*, penis; roots of tree (and many associated symbolic references).

*jelagandja*, a spirit bag; dilly bag; symbolic uterus.

Jelangbara, Port Bradshaw; sacred site on which the Djanggawul landed, of great significance in this cycle.

*jiritja*, one of the two moieties in the dual organization: associated with certain Spirits, Ancestral Beings and so on with which the Djanggawul came into association.

*jiritja nara*, the ceremonies associated with this moiety: connected only indirectly with the Djanggawul.

*judu*, child; semen.

*jugujugu*, younger sibling.

Julunggul, Rock Python snake, Rainbow, phallic symbol; used in association with the Wauwalak Sisters, a separate *dua* moiety cycle.

*kunapipi*, ceremonies related to the Wauwalak Sisters, and to a Fertility Mother concept introduced into northern Arnhem Land from the south; of higher ritual value than the *djunggawon*.

Laintjung, a *jiritja* moiety Ancestral Being who, with his son Banaitja, is the sponsor and instigator of the *jiritja nara* ceremonies.

*ligan*, jutting limb of a tree; elbow (of the Djanggawul Brother); sacred emblem; part of the *djuda rangga*, etc.

*lindaridj*, parakeet; feathers; redbreast feathers; feathered string and pendants. Of great importance in this cycle, with many symbolic references.

linguistic group, see *mata*.

*maidjara*, all the sacred emblems together.

## *Glossary*

● 184 ***mala***, in general speech, a crowd; specifically, a clan, with which one or more linguistic groups (*mata*) are associated; exogamous, and of patrilineal descent.

***malara***, group of clans; crowd; flock (of birds).

***muli***, human spirit, living or dead; used also in reference to *rangga*; a likeness, shadow, or reflection.

***mandiela***, circumcision ceremony associated with the Wauwalak Cycle: introduced into north-central Arnhem Land, but not into the north-east.

***marabinjin***, a species of sawfish.

***mareiin*** (or ***mareijin***), meaning sacred: also, a *nara* ceremony. Used in reference to men and women under certain conditions, to ceremonies, emblems, etc.

***mari***, mother's mother, mother's mother's brother, mother's brother's son's wife, mother's mother's brother's son's son or daughter, wife's brother's wife. See *waridj* and *gudara*.

***mata***, a linguistic group: one or more may belong to a clan or *mala*: exogamous, and of patrilineal descent. The *mata* is one of the most important units in eastern Arnhem Land social organization.

***mawulan***, sacred emblem (*rangga*); stick used by the Djanggawul as a 'walking stick'; of life-saving properties (used to obtain water and make wells).

***milngur***, 'well', gushing spring; of symbolic significance.

Miralaidj, the younger Djanggawul Sister. See *wirlgul*.

moiety, see *dua*; *jiritja*; patrilineal in descent, and exogamous.

***mugul rumarang***, actual wife's mother (tabu).

***munji***, red berries of an unidentified bush.

***nara***, ceremony, see *dua nara*; *jiritja nara*.

native companion, the brolga bird.

***ngadiba***, waist-band of human hair.

***ngadili***, black cockatoo.

***ngainmara*** mat, conically shaped. Of major significance in this cycle, belonging to the Djanggawul Sisters; a uterus symbol, a whale, etc.

***ngandi***, mother.

***ngaunngan***, tabu.

***ngurlmag***, ceremonies of the Wauwalak cycle, of higher ritual status than the *kunapipi* or *djunggawon*.

***nundu***, a short conical mangrove shell (collected by the Djanggawul Sisters when their sacred emblems and bags were stolen by the men).

'power', sacred and ritual power, *dal*. A quality possessed by the Creative Beings, including the Djanggawul.

***ragai***, bulrush roots.

***rangga***, sacred emblem: used throughout this Djanggawul cycle.

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## *Glossary*

*rangga* folk, *rangga* clansfolk, 'Sons and Daughters of the Djanggawul', those who initially emerged from the Djanggawul Sisters; ancestors of the present-day eastern Arnhem Landers; various symbolic references.

sacred hut, see shade, sacred.

sacred poles, emblems with life-giving properties (that is, *rangga*).

shade, sacred; hut or shelter placed (in this context) on the *nara* ceremonial ground from which dancers emerge; in it the *rangga* emblems are stored. Symbolic of the uterus, etc.

spearthrower, wooden object used to propel a spear.

spring water, which gushes forth when a *rangga* emblem is plunged into the ground; water bubbling up from the ground; well or waterhole overflowing. Symbolically significant.

'sugarbag', bee, wild honey (deposited in the ground or tree).

totemic, natural species and inanimate objects etc, which through their divine association with the Djanggawul Sisters and Brother (or other Creative Beings) become totemic. The Djanggawul themselves were not totemic.

trepang, bêche-de-mer, sea slug: collected in historic times by the Baijini (pre-Maccassans) and Macassan traders.

Two Sisters, in this context the Djanggawul Sisters; the Fertility Mothers.

*wagu*, sister's son or daughter (man speaking); own son or daughter (woman speaking).

*waridj*, mother's mother's brother's son's son; or *mari*; a non-tabu-ed 'mother-in-law' (mother's brother's wife).

waterhole, see well.

Wauwalak, Two Sisters of the *dua* moiety, who sponsored the *djunggawon*, *kunapipi*, *ngurlmag* and *mandiela* ceremonies.

well, a waterhole, made by the Creative Beings: in this area, either rockholes, soaks or deep wells of a permanent nature, in low-lying coastal regions subject to tidal fluctuations and monsoonal flooding. Many symbolic references.

wet season, monsoonal period, commencing in approximately November–December, and ending in approximately April–May.

*wirlgul*, referring to the younger Djanggawul Sister: an adolescent or pre-adolescent girl.

*wongar*, Dreaming, (belonging to the) 'Eternal' Dreamtime or 'Eternal Stream', Ancestral Times; Mythological period. Some Ancestral Beings and Spirits are *wongar*, but not the Djanggawul. Mainly a totemic concept.

*wulma*, cloud.

yam stick, woman's digging stick; in this context, used by the Djanggawul, a sacred emblem. See *ganinjari*.

9: Thomson E-5 (1935-1943) 1949
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## MAPS

Fig. 1. Map of Arnhem Land showing the area covered by the Ceremonial Exchange Cycle *At end of book*

Fig. 2. Map of Arnhem Land illustrating some of the characteristic *gerri* of each sector, etc. " " "

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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[p. vi] D.F.T.

## NOTE

The following symbols have been used in this monograph:

ä for the sound of the vowel in sun.

ŋ for the sound of ng in singer.

15:Chaseling M-5 (ca. 1934-1936)1957
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greatest of the Reserves and is in the north of the Northern Territory. Its northern shores are washed by the Arafura Sea; on the east it is bounded by the Gulf of Carpentaria; and to the south lies the barrier of high, impenetrable, barren sand-stone mountains and deep gorges. Approximately thirty-four thousand square miles of this desolate country, with its aboriginal population of three thousand, was declared an Aboriginal Reserve in 1931.

The writing of this book has entailed the collecting of notes, incidents, myths, and nomads' quaint sayings, which I have jotted down on scraps of paper or on the fly-leaves of books I have had with me in the bush, in aboriginal canoes, or on luggers. In the spelling of aboriginal names and phrases I have not used any system of phonetics, but have attempted to give ordinary English letter values. 'Yulengor' is a general race-term applied by Stone Age men of east Arnhem Land to all nomads, in the way that we refer to them as aborigines. 'Yulengor' is not used elsewhere.

I gratefully acknowledge help given by Professor A. P. Elkin who prepared the illuminating introduction. But for my wife the notes would have been offered to the public years ago, and she has my thanks for the wisdom of such restraint, and for encouragement and constructive criticism as I have attempted to convey to the printed page the fascinating customs, unforgettable experiences, and mind-teasing Yulengor sayings of Arnhem Land.

W. S. C.

*Brisbane*, 1956

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aboriginal dialect than for several hundred nomads to learn English, I arranged with two youths to teach me. But until I constantly practised the local dialect on them I found that they were learning English much faster than I was learning their tongue. In their anxiety to learn English, they said that it would be quicker for me to teach them than for me to bother to learn aboriginal; moreover, I would eventually go back to my own people, and they would then have to start all over again and teach my successor.

If good English is spoken to the aboriginal he learns it with an ability and speed that makes the use of pidgin English absurd. No one knows where pidgin English originated, but the term 'pidgin' is thought to be a Chinese corruption of the word 'business'. Through the years there has been a local fungus-development of an Australian pidgin-jargon, in which occur such travesties of speech as 'blackfellow', 'gin', 'lubra', 'thinkin', 'savvy', 'sitdown', 'alonga', and 'gammon'; and these in turn have been reinforced by still more hybrid phrases and transplanted by traders throughout the South Pacific.

At Goulburn Island where a school had been established for twenty years, a Government doctor was making an inspection and singled out an old woman for further attention. Turning to her son, the doctor loosed a flood of pidgin which I failed to follow, but I gathered that he wanted to know how long her fingers had been doubled up. The heavy silence was broken by the boy saying, in perfectly modulated English: 'I beg your pardon, doctor?' Fortunately the medico had a sense of humour and his laughter cleared the way for a successful inquiry in English. Recently a naval patrol vessel anchored off Goulburn Island, and an officer questioned a youth in pidgin. The boy said in surprise: 'Excuse me, sir, are you a "new Australian"?'

In writing the dialect, I found that several English consonants were not needed and the ordinary alphabet had to be

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104 rearranged. Consonants also could be revalued to provide for the common 'ng' and 'ny' at the beginning of many words, and for the frequent 'tch' we used 'tj'. Vagaries of
192 pronunciation occurred in unwritten and slurred words, such as 'nama' and 'ngama' (the verbs 'to see' and 'to hear'). For years I was confused by the almost indistinguishable differences (all vowels being short) between the verb 'ngurra' (I lie down), the noun 'ngurru' (a nose), the adjectival suffix 'nguru' (from), and the noun 'ngurra' (a 'fire'). 'Jukor' is a louse whilst any sort of fat is 'jukorr'. There seems to be no connexion between the terms, except
[262] that the fat of any fish or game is considered a rare and
[515] tasty morsel, the sight of it exciting children as much as would a tin of lollies, and head-lice are small fat parasites which women and children gather from each other's heads and eat with obvious relish.

193 It has been said that aboriginal languages have a common root-stock, and that some features are common to them all.
[197] The indefinite article in language is missing in Arnhem Land, as it is elsewhere, but 'ka' is used in the north as the equivalent of the English conjunction 'and'. With one or two exceptions aboriginal adjectives follow the noun, not only in the north but throughout Australia. Some forms of the pronoun 'ngara' (I) or 'ngaraku' ('my' or 'mine') are found in all dialects from Cape York to Cape Leeuwin. In addition to singular and plural pronouns, there are also first, second, and third duals: 'I', 'you', and 'he' are there; 'ngali' refers to the two of us when both are present; 'nyilinyu' indicates two persons, of whom one is absent—for example, if a man said to me 'Who made that canoe?' and it belonged to an absent friend and me, I should reply 'nyilinyu' (the two of us 'made it'). 'Numa' is the form of 'you two' and 'munda' refers to 'those two'.

The language runs to inclusive and exclusive plurals in which 'napuru' refers exclusively to those of us in the